Jackson (W.)

CAUTIONS AND ADVICE

TO THE

PUBLIC,

RESPECTING SOME

ABUSES IN MEDICINE,

Through the Malpractices of

QUACKS OR PRETENDERS

TO THE

MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL ARTS.

By WILLIAM JACKSON,

MEMBER OF THE CORPORATION OF SURGEONS OF LONDON, &c.
LATE SURGEON IN THE ARMY, AND NOW A PRACTITIONER
AT ISLINGTON.

"Ne Sutor ultra crepidam."

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CAUTIONS AND ADVICE

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ON

ABUSES IN MEDICINE,

AND

CONCEITED PRETENDERS

IN THE

MEDICAL AND CHIRURGICAL ARTS.

By WILLIAM JACKSON,

PREFACE.

HEALTH is the greateſt bleſſing that we can enjoy in this tranſitory life; without it, riches, ſplendour, nor any worldly acquiſitions, can produce neither happineſs nor content. If this be admitted, it is preſumed that an attempt to preſerve it from thoſe who are daily lying in wait for its deſtruction, will not be conſidered as unworthy of public notice.

The Intention of the following Sheets is directed to this end.—Medical Impoſtors are numerous in this country; and I am inclined to think, that multitudes fall a ſacrifice to their temerity and ignorance. This evil, however, appears very little regarded, and men, in every reſpect unqualified for what they profeſs, are ſuffered to ſport with the lives and conſtitutions of their fellow creatures, while they themſelves acquire fortunes at the

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expence of humanity. Quacks are a diſgrace to the practice of medicine, and the encouragement they experience in this kingdom, is obviouſly the encreaſe of their number. And as the deſire of health and eaſe is ſo innate in us, it is aſtoniſhing that ſuch numbers of afflicted perſons will ſo inconſiderately commit themſelves to the management of perſons who are ſo badly qualified to reſtore them to health; they more frequently aggravate maladies, and render thoſe difficult and complex, which by a judicious method, might eaſily have been remedied.

I have often regretted, that no one has taken up this ſubject, which I conſider as of the higheſt importance to the Public, and to the welfare of Society. This omiſſion, perhaps, may have proceeded from a ſuſpicion that a Publication of this kind, from a Medical Practitioner, would not be favourably received; and that the Author, inſtead of correcting the abuſe, might incur cenſure and ridicule. From advocates for Quackery, I acknowledge, theſe might reaſonably be expected. But, however

ever ſuch a conſideration may have influenced others, I have ventured to deliver my thoughts upon this ſubject; and I flatter myſelf, that there are many in the world, whoſe ſentiments are not materially different from mine.

I have not the vanity to ſuppoſe, that any thing I can ſay on this Subject, will have influence over the majority of thoſe who are advocates for Quackery, ſufficient to induce them to relinquiſh their faith; but I ſhall conſider myſelf amply rewarded for my trouble if I ſhall have been inſtrumental in preventing the deſtruction of a few individuals.

It is not my intention to enter into a minute detail on the various quack medicines, and ſpecifics, ſold under pompous titles and fictitious names, at Bookſellers, Perfumers, &c. nor do I mean to aſſert, that they are all compoſed of ingredients which have deleterious qualities. But this I can truly affirm, that moſt of them are inadequate to the cure of thoſe diſeaſes for which they are recommended. The diverſity of conſtitutions, and ſymptoms, in

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different perſons, labouring under the ſame diſeaſe, which will ever be attended to by a judicious practitioner, muſt render the adminiſtration of any ſpecific, at beſt, very precarious; and I am firmly perſuaded, that many of thoſe certificates where they are repreſented as having performed miraculous cures, would, upon minute inveſtigation, be found, if not falſe, at leaſt very much exaggerated. It is my intention to confine myſelf chiefly to thoſe abuſes in medicine which are moſt liable to be productive of fatal conſequences to mankind.

I ſuſpect that a publication on Quackery, coming from one of the Faculty, will be differently received; by ſome it may be conſidered as the effect of prejudice and malevolence; by others, as proceeding from vanity or intereſted views. But I hope to be believed, when I declare, that neither of theſe motives have influenced me. No perſon can be more capable of judging of the fatal effects that may often reſult from the injudicious treatment of diſeaſes, than medical men. There-

Therefore, I hope, that the more candid, and ſenſible part of my readers, will reflect upon the importance of the ſubject; and I flatter myſelf, they will expect no farther apology from me, for intruding upon the public my ſentiments, with a view to admoniſh mankind to avoid ſuch raſh practitioners, from a full conviction of the inaccuracy, and falſehood of their doctrines, and the dangerous tendency of their practices.

When I firſt reſolved to publiſh my ſentiments on this ſubject, I intended to annex ſome obſervations reſpecting the errors which are committed in the management of children,—but as this is a ſubject which I conſider equally as intereſting as the preſent, and the little time I can at preſent devote from my profeſſional purſuits, does not afford me ſufficient leizure, I therefore muſt reſerve that object for another opportunity. Errors in the management of children, through the miſconduct of ſome parents and nurſes, are certainly pernicious to ſociety, and the encreaſe of population.

Through

Through the whole of this Pamphlet, I have endeavoured to expreſs myſelf as clearly, and explicitly as I am able.—I am aware, that there is great room for criticiſm; but I hope, that the importance of the ſubject, and the goodneſs of my intention, will be conſidered as ſome compenſation for any defects that may be found in the execution. The dread of illiberal aſperſions, or malevolent criticiſm, will never deter a man of integrity from doing whatever he can to promote the public good; I am therefore under the leſs anxiety concerning the fate of this Pamphlet, which I ſubmit to the candor and impartiality of thoſe who are enemies to Quackery and Deception.

ADVICE

ADVICE, &c.

THE numerous Empirics, or Pretenders to the Sciences of Medicine and Surgery, which this nation is infeſted with, uſually called Quacks and Mountebanks (of the former both male and female) the ravages they muſt unavoidably commit on the conſtitutions of many of its inhabitants; and the infamous impoſitions and deceptions they are daily practiſing on the credulous part of mankind, particularly on the inferior claſſes of people, who have no money to ſpare; and on whoſe health and recovery, the ſupport and maintenance of a family frequently depends; calls loudly for redreſs, and for the interference of the magiſtrates: by whoſe ſtrenuous exertions the public might

be rid of a ſet, whoſe practices are truly dangerous, and principles highly notorious.

I am really concerned when I reflect, how ſuch caitiffs are allowed to continue to maſſacre their fellow creatures with impunity; who, had they their juſt deſerts, ſhould be taken into cuſtody, and properly * puniſhed for their baſe preſumptions: whoſe ſole aim is to defraud the public of their money; and they often deprive them of what is more valuable. But this does not appear to be conſidered a circumſtance worthy of notice. Many other illegal, though leſs important proceedings, which have been intruded into ſociety, are prohibited: but one, in which the lives and health of mankind are ſo materially concerned, and which ought

* When any mountebanks appeared in Montpellier, the magiſtrates had a power to mount each of them on a meagre miſerable aſs, with his head to the aſs's tail. In this condition they were led throughout the whole city, attended with the ſhouts and hooting of the children, and the mob beating them, throwing filth and ordure at them, reviling them, and dragging them all about. See Dr. Tiſſot's Avis an Peuple, Vol. ii. Chap. 33. p. 276. Sect. 621.

to be a principal conſideration, is entirely overlooked: therefore they are permitted to continue their iniquitous practices unmoleſted.

I ſhould imagine, it would require very little reflection from every enemy to impoſitions and defrauders, (were they to turn their thoughts to this ſubject) to convince them, that a regulation in this particular, would be productive of very ſalutary effects. And by putting a ſtop to ſo glaring an evil, of ſo dangerous a tendency, would preſerve numbers that fall ſacrifices to ignorance and miſconduct. Nor would it be found ſo difficult a taſk to effect, as ſome may conceive it to be.

Many things (though apparently difficult) are to be effected, when perſons of authority are zealouſly inclined to eradicate evils: and it is high time they ſhould receive ſome information on this, ſo eſſentially hurtful to ſociety. But while the minds of mankind continue infected with prejudices and ſuperſtitious notions, and while ſuch characters are conſidered qualified for what they profeſs, ſuch a re-

formation, I allow, will be impracticable. But if mankind were to diveſt themſelves of this opinion, and not ſo eaſily be prevailed upon to yield up their ſenſes, health, and money to ſuch impoſtors; I am inclined to think, they would exert their efforts to prevent what ſo nearly concerns them, as the abuſe of medicine; nor do I apprehend, they would be at a loſs to eſtabliſh a plan for aboliſhing Empiriciſm. For thoſe who are inſpired with principles of humanity, and a ſympathetic feeling for the ſufferings of others, would not be backward in a cauſe ſo generally intereſting.

The numerous puffing advertiſements, that daily appear in the News Papers, and the variety of hand-bills that are offered to the public in all quarters of the metropolis, evidently ſhew the encouragement and ſupport of quackery; and the credulity of mankind, in repoſing a confidence in ſuch ignorant and unworthy characters; whom, void of remorſe of conſcience, honour, or honeſty, frequent opportunities are afforded them to prey upon the conſtitutions

ſtitutions and properties of thoſe whoſe lot is ſo unfortunate as to fall under their hands.

Perhaps, moſt of my readers may have had the curioſity of peruſing ſome of theſe boaſted advertiſements and hand-bills, therefore muſt have perceived that many of them affirm, that their noſtrums are infallible cures in a variety of diſeaſes, and in every ſtage of a diſtemper, without any regard to age, conſtitution, ſex, or any particular circumſtances that may attend individuals. Others more modeſtly confine themſelves to one diſeaſe; or perhaps two or three only, therefore leſs liable to be ſo univerſally deſtructive.

To believe that any medicine is capable of curing every diſeaſe indiſcriminately, muſt be rationally to conſider that each diſeaſe proceeds from one and the ſame cauſe, and that the diverſity of the ſymptoms requires no variations in the mode of treatment. But thoſe who ſuppoſe (which muſt be obvious to every reflecting mind) that different diſeaſes, and the ſame diſeaſe in different perſons, proceeds from

various

various cauſes; that different cauſes produce different effects, and conſequently require different methods of treatment, I think cannot heſitate in acknowledging the falſehood and abſurdity of ſuch pretenſions, and the dangerous tendency of ſuch practices. And whoever advertiſes any medicine as an univerſal remedy for all diſeaſes, is an impoſtor; as no ſuch remedy can exiſt: a little reflection on the oppoſite cauſes of diſeaſes, muſt convince every rational perſon of the abſurdity of ſuch an attempt. Can any one expect to cure a dropſy, which proceeds from too great a laxity of the * fibres, and a thin diſſolved ſtate of the blood, by the ſame remedies that are made uſe of to cure an inflammatory diſeaſe, as a † pleureſy or ‡ peripneumony, where the fibres are tenſe and rigid, and the blood too thick and

* Fibres are ſimple thread-like bodies ſerving to form other parts.

† Pleuriſy is an inflammation of the membrane that covers the lungs.

‡ Peripneumony is an inflammation of the ſubſtance of the lungs,

viſcid?

viſcid? and yet in thoſe hand-bills and advertiſements you may often ſee diſeaſes mentioned of as oppoſite a nature, to be cured by the ſame ſovereign remedy.

But if it is allowed, that diſeaſes ariſe from different cauſes, that their characters are various, that alterations take place throughout their progreſs and duration; that they are ſuſceptible of complications; that changes occur from ſeaſons, ſexes, different epidemics, and other cauſes; that theſe circumſtances render it indiſpenſably neceſſary to alter the medicines, to augment or diminiſh the doſe of any particular ſubſtance in the form of the preſcription, or wholly to remove it, and ſubſtitute another: which evidently ſhews how hazardous it is, to have them directed by unſkilful perſons. It requires great induſtry and perſeverance to inveſtigate the true cauſes of diſeaſes, and the proper means of obviating them: therefore the ſkilful management in the quantity or doſe of any medicine, adapted to the particular circumſtances of each individual, can only be acquired by a very extenſive experience.

experience. Thoſe are facts, which I think will be acknowledged by every learned unprejudiced man; and nothing but the moſt determined obſtinacy and ignorance can contradict them.

It is really a melancholy reflection, that ſo great a part of mankind ſhould ſo raſhly have recourſe to ſuch private executioners, or their boaſted ſpecifics, when afflicted with diſeaſes; whereby they not only expoſe themſelves to the moſt iniquitous frauds and impoſitions, but place their conſtitutions and lives into the hands of a mercileſs charlatan, who has no character to loſe, and who obtains a livelihood at the expence of the conſtitutions and lives of thoſe who are ſo unfortunately miſled, as to be drawn into his ſnare. Being loſt to every ſenſe of honor and integrity, he aſſumes the air of importance and wiſdom, which he is ill qualified for, and preſumes to adminiſter remedies for diſeaſes, whoſe real cauſes, nature, and proper mode of treatment he is as ignorant of as his patients. Blinded by credulity, his employers attentively liſten to

his jargon, ſwallow his noſtrums, and comply with his directions; till time and diſappointment detect the fraud, which few are found to be ingenuous enough to confeſs. Whether this proceeds from an unwillingneſs to acknowledge they have been impoſed upon, or from a wiſh to ſee others impoſed upon; or from whatever motive, I will not pretend to determine: but it is not uncommon, for perſons to declare that they have received benefit, when it clearly appeared they were in the ſame ſituation (and perhaps in a worſe) than on their firſt application to them. Such conduct muſt certainly be conſidered diſingenuous, and pernicious to mankind.

It is not the inferior claſſes of people only that become the dupes of Empirics; it is not uncommon for perſons of rank and wealth to be caught in this ſnare, and to confide in their opinions; and ſometimes after having conſulted the moſt able and judicious phyſicians.

It is aſtoniſhing, that perſons of education and good ſenſe ſhould ſuffer them-

ſelves to be ſo greatly impoſed upon, as to be prevailed on to ſuppoſe, that it is in the power of thoſe who practiſe phyſic and ſurgery at random, without education, and without underſtanding the principles of the art; and to imagine that they are capable (however the patient may be ſituated) of effecting more than the man, who is qualified in every particular for the practice of the profeſſions alluded to. This is to prefer ignorance and falſehood to learning and veracity. Such an opinion I conſider to be the greateſt mark of diſreſpect that can be ſhewn to ſo truly reſpectable, and valuable characters, as I conſider ingenious phyſicians to be, men of honor and integrity; who only ought to be conſidered the juſt ſubjects of our confidence: who will not heſitate in acknowledging, that they cannot effect what they perceive impoſſible; while the quacks, with unbounded aſſurance, promiſe to complete what they do not underſtand, without conſidering whether it is practicable or not. How very oppoſite is the conduct of thoſe two characters! The

encouragement this herd meets with from the higher claſſes, will ever influence the lower claſſes of people in their favour and confidence. They will not deſiſt from perſuading them, as long as they can extort a ſhilling from them, that they are upon the eve of being cured, although they have not afforded them a jot of relief; till, from length of time, and conſumption of caſh, thoſe poor deluded people experimentally find out, that they have been infamouſly cheated; if their diſeaſes have not been greatly aggravated, through loſs of time, and pernicious medicines.

It is much to be regretted, that the Public in general are ſo regardleſs of their welfare, as to pay ſo little attention to the reputations and abilities of thoſe under whoſe care they entruſt themſelves; as their recovery muſt depend upon a judicious mode of treatment; and who frequently apply to perſons, who are as unacquainted with the nature of their diſeaſes, and the right method of treating them, as their patients. Erroneous treat-

ment muſt be the conſequence; maladies are aggravated inſtead of remedied, nature is interrupted inſtead of being aſſiſted; and far better would it be, if the diſeaſe were left to her efforts only: who will frequently readily co-operate with remedies calculated for the removal of diſeaſe, and preſervation of our exiſtence; and conſtantly endeavour to counteract the ill effects of thoſe that have a tendency to our deſtruction; but whoſe favourable interpoſitions are frequently overpowered by the rude ſhocks ſhe ſo frequently ſuſtains: her endeavours at length become languid and exhauſted, and mankind falls a ſacrifice to ignorance and knavery.

I am much concerned to be under the neceſſity of aſſerting this melancholy fact, that many of the human ſpecies periſh by neglect, or mal-treatment; whom, if their diſtempers had been early attended to, or had they been placed under the care of a ſkilful and diſcerning practitioner, who would have adminiſtered proper medicines ſuitable to the nature of their caſes, and virulence of their ſymptoms;

by

by which means the ravages of diſeaſes being counteracted and ſubdued, the afflicted patients might have been reſtored. But by delivering themſelves into the hands of ignorant impoſtors, their diſeaſes are attacked by noſtrums totally unapplicable to the nature of their caſes, and probably compoſed of deleterious qualities; by which their maladies are greatly aggravated, and ſituations rendered more unſupportable. But allowing that the medicines they adminiſter ſhould be in their nature ſo ſimple, as to be entirely inoffenſive, ſo as to be incapable of aggravating the ſymptoms, or affording any benefit; allowing this to be the caſe, they then prove ſo far pernicious, that the afflicted perſon depending on the efficacy of a medicine which is poſſeſſed of none, much valuable time is loſt, ſymptoms increaſe, and become violent; the diſeaſe advances with rapid ſtrides, and the patient and friends are convinced of the fallacy, but frequently when too late. They then apply to the man of judgment, when there is nothing in his power to do,

but

but to paſs the doleful ſentence; that the favourable opportunity has paſſed by, and he can only conſider himſelf the Undertaker's harbinger.

It is natural for mankind to have an anxious deſire for the prolongation of their exiſtence; and in many reſpects, they endeavour to avoid what they conceive will have a tendency to impair their health, or deſtroy the vital principles. But many there are, who are not capable of diſtinguiſhing the ſafeſt paths from the dangerous ones; and in no inſtance does this appear more clear than in the preſent.

The highwayman, or footpad, who accoſts a man on the highway, and robs, and perhaps murders him, has the chance of defending himſelf, or being aſſiſted by the arrival of other travellers. But the man who intrudes himſelf on a ſick perſon, as one ſkilled in the practice of phyſic, who is entirely ignorant of the ſcience, and the diſeaſe which he undertakes to treat, is a more dangerous character than either of the former, and equally deſerving of puniſhment.

That

That a lying, impudent, knaviſh impoſtor, ſhould elevate himſelf on a ſcaffold, in a public ſituation, ſurrounded by ſpectators, liſtening to the great encomiums he is beſtowing upon himſelf, or by his aſſiſtant, whom he has employed and tutored for that purpoſe; whoſe aſſertions are readily credited by his auditors; particularly on ſeeing a few poor deluded perſons, whom he has perſuaded into his confidence, and the management of whoſe caſes he publicly exhibits, extolling his own fame in the treatment of them; aſſerting a multiplicity of falſehoods concerning their ſituations before their applications to him: in ſhort, he wiſhes to be conſidered a wonder of the age, or a * ſupernatural being, poſſeſſed of ſuperior talents to any other man: ſuch are called

* Many attempt, knowing the objections that may be advanced on their never having received a medical education, to elude them, by prevailing on their auditors to believe, that they poſſeſs a ſupernatural gift, which is far ſuperior to all human knowledge. In what light ſuch pretenſions will be conſidered by a man of ſenſe, and void of ſuperſtition, it is hardly neceſſary to inſert.

mounte-

* mountebanks. Many of thoſe vagrants travel about from one county to another, to different villages, and country towns, to decoy ſimple ruſtics, who are fond of novelty, and eaſily prevailed upon to believe every lie, and to be charmed with every deception, that ſuch baſe fellows conſider their intereſt to practiſe upon them.

Others, nominated Empirics, Charlatans, or Quacks, who reſide in cities and towns; ſome of them (particularly in London) rent ſpacious houſes, entitle

* The credit of this market, this fair hunting doctor, ſurrounded by five or ſix hundred peaſants, ſtaring and gaping at him, and counting themſelves happy in his condeſcending to cheat them of their very ſcarce and neceſſary caſh, by ſelling them, for twenty times more than its real worth, a medicine whoſe beſt quality were to be only a uſeleſs one; the credit, I ſay, of this vile, yet tolerated cheat, would quickly vaniſh, could each of his auditors be perſuaded, of what is ſtrictly true, that, except a little more tenderneſs and agility of hand, he knows full as much as his doctor; and that if he could aſſume as much impudence, he would immediately have as much ability, would equally deſerve the ſame reputation, and to have the ſame confidence repoſed in him. Dr. Tiſſot's Avis au Peuple, Chap. xxxv. p. 270. Sect. 613.

them-

themſelves Phyſicians of Diſpenſaries, and keep their equipages. Others *, not quite ſo fortunate, and probably poſſeſſed of leſs cunning, are neceſſitated to live in a more humble way. The former having by ſtratagem deviſed more ſpeedy and effectual methods of deceiving and defrauding the higher ranks of people of their caſh; perhaps by being poſſeſſed of a greater ſhare of aſſurance, or by being more intriguing fellows than the latter, and better ſkilled in the art of deception: while the latter muſt be content to prey upon the more needy and laborious part of mankind.

I have heard men, whoſe underſtandings (by their converſation on other ſubjects) I ſhould have imagined would have taught them leſs credulity, highly extolling ſome of thoſe characters, relating inſtances of wonderful cures performed by them; and even affirming, that they conſidered them more ſkilful and meritorious than the regular practitioner.

* I am well informed, that there are at this time in London perſons of this deſcription, who practiſe as phyſicians, that have been originally blackſmiths, farriers, coblers, and tinkers.

Now the numbers that apply to theſe impoſtors, that ſome of them ſhould not recover is almoſt phyſically impoſſible, and I acknowledge it to be ſometimes the caſe; but yet it is not leſs certain, that they are dangerous and deſtructive characters. Such cures, when they do happen, cannot be in conſequence of the ſkill of a ſet of men, who are neither acquainted with the nature of diſeaſes, the quality of the medicines they adminiſter, nor the circumſtances neceſſary to be conſidered. Allowing then, that their noſtrums ſhould accidentally ſucceed, I do not conſider them in a more favourable view on that account, as ſuch cures, when they do happen, muſt be merely the effect of chance. Their liſts, or certificates of cures, if any perſon would take the trouble of inquiring into the particulars, would be frequently found to be mere chimeras, or forgeries, calculated to delude mankind. But if a catalogue of their murderous exploits could be annually obtained, mankind would then be inſpired with ſuch a wholeſome dread of them, that they would ceaſe any longer to be their advocates,

and

and would be convinced of their errors, in countenancing and entruſting themſelves under the hands of ſuch a band of executioners.

It is extraordinary, that medical men of all others ſhould be conſidered ſo dull of comprehenſion, as to be unable to acquire the proper knowledge of their profeſſion, or otherwiſe ſo baſe and wicked, as not to practiſe it to the beſt of their judgments: and that a man, who has ſpent the former part of his life in purſuing quite a different employment, ſhall at once commence phyſician, or ſurgeon, without having ever received any inſtructions for the practice of ſo important a ſcience. It is conſidered, that in other arts, and in every trade, a proper length of time is requiſite, or an apprenticeſhip muſt be ſerved, before any one is ſuppoſed to have arrived at a ſufficient degree of knowledge, ſo as to be qualified to act for himſelf. If a man ſhould attempt to perſuade another, that he could mend his watch, when broken, or out of repair, or any other complex machine, who was not brought up to the trade, nor received

proper inſtructions, he would be ridiculed for his pretenſions, and meet with no * employment. But if a man preſumes to aſſert, that he is capable of rectifying ſo very wonderful, and curiouſly conſtructed a machine as the human body, when diſordered, the bait is then ſwallowed, confidence is repoſed in him, he is countenanced and ſupported; and by many conſidered more ſkilful, than the man who has occupied the greater part of his life in the ſtudy of his profeſſion.

* Let a ſoldier, diſcarded from his regiment for his roguiſh tricks, or who is a deſerter from it, a bankrupt, a diſreputable eccleſiaſtic, a drunken barber, or multitudes of ſuch other worthleſs people, advertiſe that they mount, ſet and fit up all kinds of jewels and trinkets in perfection; if any of theſe are not known, if no perſon in the place has ever ſeen any of their work, or if they cannot produce authentic teſtimonials of their honeſty, and their ability in their buſineſs, not a ſingle individual will truſt them with two pennyworth of falſe ſtones to work upon; in ſhort, they muſt be famiſhed. But if inſtead of profeſſing themſelves jewellers, they poſt themſelves up as phyſicians, the crowd purchaſe, at a high rate, the pleaſure of truſting them with the care of their lives, the remaining part of which they rarely fail to empoiſon. Dr. Tiſſot's Avis au Peuple, Chap. xxxv. Sect. 614. p. 271.

It is indiſpenſably neceſſary, that every artiſt ſhould be well acquainted with the ſubject matter on which he works: and as there is no profeſſion, or calling whatever, that requires a more regular and aſſiduous application, than the art of medicine, before any one can arrive to that degree of perfection, as to be a competent maſter of the ſcience: conſequently the knowledge of anatomy * and phyſiology † is indiſputably neceſſary, for either the phyſician or ſurgeon, who would wiſh to practiſe with ſatisfaction to himſelf, and benefit to the afflicted. For, how can a profeſſion of ſuch conſequence to mankind be thoroughly underſtood, unleſs the practitioner be well acquainted with the theoretical principles of the art? which muſt pave the way to a knowledge of the cure of diſeaſes.

* Anatomy is the diſſecting a human body, or ſeparating its component parts, to diſcover their ſituations, figure, and uſes; which leads to the knowledge of nature, and the cure of diſeaſes.

† Phyſiology is the doctrine of the animal œconomy; or that which teaches the conſtitution of the body, ſo far as it is in a healthy ſtate.

It is certain, that nature does not diſtribute her bounty equally to mankind. Some men are born with ſuperior underſtandings to others, who can penetrate into matters more deeply, and comprehend more quickly and accurately. Thoſe poſſeſſed of ſuch ſhining qualities promiſe fair to excel others, in whatever profeſſion or ſituation they may be placed; and to be ſerviceable to mankind, and an ornament to their country, (provided their minds are properly cultivated). Many that are born with ſuch extraordinary talents, are not ſo fortunate as to have an opportunity of improving them, but they remain buried in obſcurity; they often know not their own abilities, they are loſt both to the world, and to themſelves. Though Providence has furniſhed them with ſuperior gifts, yet fortune does not always afford them an opportunity of diſplaying them. As good land cannot produce corn if no ſeed is ſown therein, neither can a man of extraordinary talents exhibit them to the world, if the rudiments

ments of erudition is not inculcated in his mind.

I ſhall next conſider the man on whom nature has diſtributed her gifts leſs bounteouſly, that is poſſeſſed only of an ordinary ſhare of underſtanding; who has received all thoſe advantages reſulting from education, which were not acceſſible by the former; he therefore becomes poſſeſſed of that knowledge which the other does not arrive at, becauſe it is not in his power to purſue the means; therefore the man of inferior genius is more perfect, becauſe he has been better inſtructed. Whereas, had the other been ſimilarly ſituated, where he might have had equal opportunities of acquiring knowledge, (and allowing both to have been equally induſtrious) he would have greatly excelled him.

It may be conſidered, that I have digreſſed from my ſubject, by thus endeavouring to explain, how much inferior the man of ſuperior genius without learning, is to him of inferior genius, with the advantages of education. But I have

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been induced to make this compariſon, in contradiction to an opinion, that I am convinced prevails among ſome people, which is, that theſe ſelf-created Doctors are born with extraordinary talents, which enables them to attain to a knowledge ſuperior to others, without requiring any earthly inſtructions, having obtained it by a ſupreme gift. But I wiſh to adviſe thoſe who undertake the cure of * diſeaſes by this gift alone, ſeriouſly to peruſe the ſixth Commandment.

That the man, who, from his youth, being inſpired with the deſire of being brought up to the practice of phyſic, after having received a liberal education, previous

* A diſeaſe is an alteration, or deviation from health of ſome one function of the body. How then can any one be acquainted with the ailment of this function, if he does not know all that is requiſite to the due diſcharge of it? Therefore a diſeaſe muſt be known before it can be cured. For to know exactly the hiſtory of a diſeaſe, its cauſes, nature, and effects; a clear knowledge of ſuch medicines as prove beneficial or detrimental, can only be acquired by the diſſection of dead bodies, whoſe diſeaſes have been carefully obſerved before their death.

to the acquiſition of what is to follow, he is then placed in a ſituation which affords him an opportunity of receiving every information requiſite to qualify him for ſuch a practitioner; who has carefully and aſſiduouſly ſtudied nature, and the different functions of the human body; who has accurately diſſected, and diſcovered the ſtructure, and uſes of the various parts of which it is compoſed, and the cauſes that may prediſpoſe them to diſeaſed alterations; who has regularly and diligently attended able profeſſors in the different branches of the profeſſion; who has cloſely viſited the ſick in the public hoſpitals, expoſed to the effluvia of infectious diſeaſes, and may truly be ſaid to have been in jeopardy every hour; who has inquired into the hiſtory of caſes, and traced them from their origin to their termination in health or diſſolution; who has induſtriouſly examined every ſymptom and alteration that has occurred through the progreſs of diſeaſes, with the effects of the medicines that has been adminiſtered, and acquires a know-

ledge of thoſe which have proved beneficial, and of thoſe which have been ineffectual. In ſhort, he carefully conſiders every circumſtance which has attended his patient; or has happened to him by his own obſervations, or the information he has received from him, or from others; and by comparing them with one another, he arrives at a knowledge of the primary cauſe of the diſeaſe, and of the beſt remedies calculated to remove it. And that after ſeveral years labour, and a conſiderable ſum of money has been expended in ſuch purſuits, before he has arrived to a ſufficient degree of experience, as to be deemed qualified for an able practitioner, he ſhall be conſidered inferior to an ignorant, illiterate knave, who is an entire ſtranger to this whole proceſs.—Fatal abſurdity! that ſuch numbers ſhould ſuffer themſelves to be led away, without allowing themſelves the liberty of reaſoning upon a ſubject which ſo nearly intereſts them.

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I have remarked, that * chronic diſeaſes are more generally ſubmitted to the treatment of Quacks, than thoſe of the † acute kind; as if it were conſidered, that they are more peculiarly qualified for the treatment of this claſs of diſeaſes than the latter, which uſually fall to the lot of the regular practitioner. Now diſeaſes of the chronic ſpecies are often ſo complicated in their nature, and variable in their ſymptoms, that they require the cleareſt diſcernment, and the niceſt accuracy in the proper management and treatment of them. They are more miſmanageable and difficult to cure than the acute; nor is it ſo eaſy to judge of the proper method to be purſued.

* Chronic is a lingering diſeaſe which continues a conſiderable time, if not during the patient's life, as an aſthma, dropſy, ſcrophula, or king's evil, &c.—they are ſometimes owing to a natural defect in the conſtitution, or acquired by irregularities in living.

† Acute is a diſeaſe which terminates in a ſhort time, or continues only a certain number of days, but not without imminent danger; ſuch are fevers, ſmall-pox, inflammations, &c.

To labour under a languiſhing, and perhaps incurable malady, at any period of life, (but particularly in youth) is certainly a very melancholy ſtate: and to reflect, that no remedy is capable of affording any laſting benefit, but merely to palliate the ſymptoms, and procure a temporary relief, by which their miſerable exiſtence may be prolonged, and rendered more ſupportable, is, I acknowledge, of all ſituations, the moſt horrid. Perſons thus circumſtanced attentively liſten to, and readily credit every fabulous report they hear of extraordinary cures performed upon perſons, repreſented to be ſimilarly ſituated with themſelves. Solicitous of obtaining a cure at any riſque, they are hurried about from one Quack to another; each promiſing to effect what is impracticable: until by their injudicious treatment cauſes often become irritated, and ſymptoms aggravated. Being unacquainted with the true nature of their diſeaſes, their hopes are revived by the plauſible promiſes of the pretender, till time and diſappointment proves the fraud.

To attend on a patient whoſe diſeaſe is ſo far advanced, and inveterate, as to be beyond the reach of our aid, and when all our efforts prove ineffectual, is certainly a very unpleaſant and melancholy part of practice. And to behold a fellow-creature languiſhing under the oppreſſion of a direful diſeaſe, and not to have it in our power to afford him any relief, nor ſometimes even to mitigate his ſufferings, is a reflection of all others the moſt mortifying and diſſatisfactory. And as hope does not deſert us even in the hour of death, to ſee him anxiouſly lifting up his eyes to his phyſical friend, whom he conſiders as his only anchor in this world, being ardently ſolicitous (and perhaps for the ſake of his family) to be delivered from that cruel tyrant Death. To ſee his afflicted and affectionate relations, who ſurround his bedſide, attentively looking at the countenance of the phyſician, in hopes to diſcover by his looks ſome favourable omen, and that a ray of hope remains; while the phyſician, who is a man of too much integrity to aſſert what is contrary to his opinion,

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(however his feelings may be affected by paſſing the ſentence) is obliged to declare, that all is done which is in the power of human art to effect, and that the reſt muſt be left to God. Such a ſcene muſt undoubtedly be, to every man inſpired with a ſympathetic feeling for the afflictions of others, truly diſmal and affecting.

To cure diſeaſes, and relieve thoſe in pain, is a very ſatisfactory employment.—But to attend a patient through a lingering, tedious diſeaſe, without any proſpect of curing him, but merely of affording him temporary eaſe, is a very melancholy and diſagreeable taſk.

How very different is the conduct of the profligate Quack to the character above deſcribed; who, not being actuated by motives of rectitude, (his own intereſt being his ſole conſideration) conceives that the ſureſt way to conceal his ignorance, and moſt effectually to deceive his employer, is to give the diſeaſe a new name, to diſapprove of every thing that has hitherto been done; and to prevail upon him

to believe, that he alone is acquainted with the true nature of his diſorder, and the remedies ſuitable to remove it; which he boldly promiſes to effect without any regard to the ſtate of the patient, or the propriety or impropriety of his aſſertions; for theſe are not objects of his conſideration. He therefore pleaſes his patient, and flatters his hopes, until the aggravation of his miſery, or a premature death, proves his doctor a villain, (but not before his own purpoſe is obtained.) But if his employers would defer paying him, until he had accompliſhed what he promiſed, I am diſpoſed to think, the fallacy would ſoon be at an end.

The frailty of human nature is ſuch, that we moſt readily approve of that advice, which is moſt flattering and ſuitable to our own inclinations. But a phyſician who is a man of ſtrict veracity, and perceives the hazardous ſtate of his patient, will not heſitate in affirming what he thinks; and becauſe he will neither flatter, nor deceive, leſs confidence is repoſed

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in him, than in the man who uſes both; and who, under the cloak of wiſdom and experience, aſſerts the moſt egregious falſehoods. He who intimates the neceſſity of perſevering in a ſtrict regimen, and that time and patience will be requiſite in the accompliſhment of a cure, will be leſs attended to, than he who conſults his patient's own inclinations, promiſes him a ſpeedy cure, and permits him to indulge in his own taſte and humour, without conſidering whether it be conſiſtent with his diſeaſe or not.

There are ſome of theſe pretenders who preſume to judge of a patient's diſeaſe merely by inſpecting his urine; and who without ſeeing the perſon, or inquiring into the ſymptoms, pretend to know what the diſeaſe is, and immediately adminiſter their medicines. If it be admitted as a fact, that they poſſeſs magic powers, or ſupernatural gifts, ſuch pretenſions may be verified; but if this is not credited, it muſt be groſs ignorance to ſuppoſe, and alſo the greateſt impoſition to perſuade the public, that the mere examination of

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their urine does afford them ſufficient information to inveſtigate the cauſes and ſymptoms of a diſeaſe, and to be able thereby to preſcribe remedies moſt ſuitable for it. The examination of a patient's urine is frequently neceſſary, together with the ſtate, and other circumſtances relative to the patient; as in fevers, and other diſorders, where the changes produced in it may aſſiſt us in judging of the approach of a criſis * in many acute diſeaſes, and the alterations that may have taken place in the progreſs of the diſeaſe, and in forming a prognoſtic. But for any one to aſſert, that he can tell a perſon's diſorder only by viewing the urine, common ſenſe, I ſhould imagine, would determine the abſurdity and fallacy of ſuch a pretenſion: and whoever directs any medicine, without any other information of the ſtate of his patient than what the

* Criſis is a change that takes place in acute diſeaſes, wherein ſuch an alteration is produced in the ſtate of the patient as to determine his fate, either for recovery or death. Its approach is judged of by a thick ſediment in the urine, and other ſymptoms.

inſpection of his urine affords, is an infamous impoſtor, and the perſon who confides in him a compleat dupe.

There are none more liable to deprive a man of his exiſtence, than thoſe ſet of Quacks termed rupture doctors; who affirm, that they have in their poſſeſſion radical cures for that diſeaſe; which too many are inclined to believe. A rupture is certainly a very troubleſome and burdenſome affliction, and moſt that labour under it are very deſirous of being cured, (if poſſible) which frequently induces them to be miſled by the falſe pretenſions of theſe miſcreants; whereby they often expoſe their lives to the moſt imminent danger, and are ſubjected to tedious confinement, painful applications, and ſometimes dangerous and raſh * operations: and

* I ſaw an inſtance of this in a mountebank, who undertook the cure of a boy of about ſix years of age, for a rupture; and not only performed the operation, but caſtrated him: when I aſked him in private, why he uſed this hazardous method, without trying a truſs, ſince his tender age would have eaſily admitted of it, he ingenuouſly confeſſed he did it for profit: for he would

and if they eſcape with their lives, they are often left in a worſe ſituation than they were before. Whereas, had they remained contented with their former conditions, and been ſatisfied with a proper truſs, they might have had no increaſe of their malady during their lives. This diſeaſe, if properly attended to, and judiciouſly treated from its commencement, will require no other application, nor any operation, (unleſs it ſhould be a * ſtrangulated rupture, which is a ſtate extremely

would have been paid but a crown for the truſs, whereas the operation brought him in ten, if not twenty. Heiſter's Surgery, eighth edition, Introduction, p. 15.

* A ſtrangulated rupture is a ſtricture made on a portion of the guts, or cawl, by the borders of the opening formed by the ſeparation of the fibres, of the tendon of a muſcle of the belly, called external, oblique, (from its ſituation and direction). This is cauſed by an inflammation of the gut, its being diſtended with air, or fæces; or an additional quantity of gut or cawl, or both, that has deſcended in thoſe that were ruptured before; and as long as this ſtricture continues, the parts are incapable of being returned into the cavity of the belly. The patient, under theſe circumſtances, is incapable of going to ſtool, the parts are painful on

extremely dangerous, and requires the immediate aſſiſtance of the moſt ſkilful ſurgeons) except the replacing of the gut, and the application of a well made truſs. This is all that can be neceſſary, or will be attempted by an honeſt man.

being handled, or when he is in an erect poſture, or on any exertion of the body, as in coughing or ſneezing. If this ſtricture continues other ſymptoms ſucceed, as ſickneſs at the ſtomach, violent vomitings, accompanied with more or leſs of a fever, and a quick and hard pulſe. It muſt be attempted to be reduced by gentle means, and by placing the body in ſuch a poſture, as may favour the return of the protruded part. If this does not ſhortly ſucceed other means muſt be tried, as bleeding, glyſters, or the fumigation of tobacco thrown into the bowels (by means of a proper machine invented for that purpoſe) cathartics, and refrigerating applications. If theſe remedies do not ſucceed, the ſymptoms ſoon become aggravated; and the only reſource left is an operation, and no time muſt be loſt. This operation conſiſts in dilating the ring, or border of the opening, by which that part of the gut, or cawl, confined by the ſtricture is ſet free, and is again returnable into the belly. But if it be delayed too long, other ſymptoms, more fatal, enſue, ſuch as convulſive hickups, coldneſs of the extremities, ſmall, interrupted pulſe, gangrene, mortification, and at laſt death. A further deſcription of this operation is totally unneceſſary here.

Before

Before I quit this ſubject, I ſhall endeavour to give my readers ſome idea of the true nature of a rupture, that they may be enabled to judge for themſelves. And I hope to convince them of the inconſiſtency and hazard of ſuch attempts, as a confirmation of what I have advanced.

A rupture is a protruſion of a greater or leſſer portion of the * inteſtines, or † omentum, or of both, the natural ſituations of which are in the cavity of the belly. The places where they uſually appear, are in the groin, upper and fore part of

* The inteſtines, or guts, are ſix in number, ſituated in the cavity of the belly, incloſed in the peritoneum, or that membrane which ſurrounds the whole cavity, and gives an external covering to every bowel contained therein. They are divided into three ſmall and three large inteſtines, the former, which are incloſed within the latter, are named duodenum, jegunum, and ilium; the latter, cœcum, colon, and rectum. Thoſe which moſt uſually deſcend, and form a rupture, are the ilium, or cœcum, and colon.

† Omentum, or caul, is ſituated on the ſurface of the inteſtines; its upper part is connected to the bottom of the ſtomach, ſpleen, and colon: it deſcends over all the other inteſtines. Its uſe is to lubricate the guts for their eaſy motions.

the thigh, and at the navel, producing an enlargement or ſwelling. The firſt is by ſurgeons named inguinal, the ſecond femoral, and the third umbilical, and they are ſo called from their ſituations. They paſs out from the belly through openings, which are natural to thoſe who have not ruptures, as well as to thoſe who have. But whichever of theſe ruptures it may happen to be, the protruded part carries before it that * membrane (before mentioned) which lines the whole cavity of the belly, and forms what is called the hernial ſac, or bag in which the rupture is contained. It is found to be of a greater or leſſer ſize, and of a different thickneſs, according to the quantity of its contents, and to the continuance of the rupture.

There are many circumſtances to be conſidered, which will render this diſorder more or leſs hazardous; for the ſame kind of rupture, in different per-

* A membrane is a white, broad, dilatable ſubſtance, covering or lining the various cavities of the body, the bowels, muſcles, &c.

ſons,

ſons, is differently ſituated. The conſtitution and age of the perſon, the date of the rupture, its being bound, or not bound by ſtricture, free, or not free from inflammation, and the general ſymptoms that attend it rendering reduction practicable, or impracticable, ought certainly to be neceſſary objects of conſideration, and will require a variation in the mode of treatment.

If a rupture is early attended to, by returning it into its natural cavity, and there retaining it by means of a * proper truſs, it will be the only method by which a radical cure can be effected. But thoſe ruptures which are of an ancient date, and which have been neglected, and ſuffered to remain down, may have contracted ſuch adheſions to their containing bag, as to render their return into the belly impracticable, and very dangerous to be attempted. And the patient ſhould be con-

* I ſay, a proper truſs, becauſe many of them are very ill made, and inadequate to the purpoſe for which they were deſigned, hence ariſes the neceſſity of applying to an eminent truſs maker.

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tented with a bag truſs, unleſs a ſtricture in this caſe ſhould take place, and obſtruction to the fæces, which will render reduction in all caſes neceſſary.

The cure of a rupture is diſtinguiſhed into radical, or perfect, and palliative, or imperfect, and though the event is different, yet the method of treatment requiſite in both is exactly the ſame; viz. returning the parts, and confining them by a proper truſs. This in ſome produces a perfect cure, in others only a palliative one; and this depends on particular circumſtances attendant on different ruptures, which it is not in our power to alter. To thoſe unacquainted with the nature of a rupture, or the anatomical ſtructure of the parts concerned in the diſeaſe, it may appear ſtrange, that the means to effect a perfect, and an imperfect cure, ſhould be entirely the ſame. But (as I have before ſaid) to return the protruded part (if practicable) in the cavity of the belly, and to confine it there by a proper truſs, is all which it is in the power of art to effect. But nature ſometimes is capable

of

of doing more; and will accompliſh a radical cure in ſome caſes, which in others is left imperfect; and this depends on certain circumſtances, which it is not in the power of human art to alter. For when the parts forming a rupture are returned, an opportunity is given to the opening through which they paſſed, and which was conſequently dilated, to contract itſelf, by which means a perfect cure ſometimes is produced. The different applications, embrocations, and remedies, which have been, and are at this time uſed, are not in the reach of the parts concerned in this diſeaſe, nor can they contribute in the leaſt to its cure. And if it has happened, that any have been cured while under ſuch a proceſs, it muſt have been owing to their long * reſting in a ſupine poſture, or to the ſtricture of a proper bandage.

* Inſtances have occurred of ruptured perſons, who, from ſome diſeaſe or accident which confined them to their beds for ſeveral weeks, have been perfectly cured of their ruptures, and have never had any return of the diſeaſe.

To enter more minutely into the nature of a rupture, would carry me beyond my preſent deſign: and I hope it will be conſidered, that I have ſo far explained the ſubject, that the reader may perceive the abſurdity and fallacy of ſuch inſignificant applications, as thoſe which are impoſed upon the public as cures for ruptures: and the raſhneſs and barbarity of others, who undertake to perform dangerous operations, which are ſo unlikely to prove ſucceſsful, that on the contrary they often prove fatal *.

There is no diſeaſe which opens a more ample field for the exerciſe of quackery, or contributes more to its ſupport, than the venereal, nor none that has ſuffered worſe treatment, and made more conſi-

* No diſeaſe has ever furniſhed ſuch a conſtant ſucceſſion of quacks as ruptures have: they, who have had ſome ſmattering of anatomy, or ſurgery, and whoſe humanity has not been their prevailing quality, have adopted one of the preceding operations, or ſomething like them; while they who have had leſs knowledge, and more timidity, have had recourſe to the more ſneaking knavery of ſpecific applications. Mr. Potts' Chirurgical Works, Vol. I. p. 170.

derable ravages among mankind to the laſt degree of decay. It would require volumes to contain the numerous inſtances of ruined conſtitutions, (not to ſay how many have been * poiſoned by the diabolical tranſactions of this neſt of empirics.) Honeſty and humanity are qualities which they are entire ſtrangers to; they neither regard the ſufferings of their fellow creatures, nor what effects their noſtrums may produce; nor any other conſideration, but money. They ſwarm in all

* I ſhould not thus have expoſed theſe little dabblers in phyſic, nor attempted to diſprove their bold and falſe aſſertions, publiſhed with a ſhameleſs front, to impoſe upon the ignorant, and ſeduce the credulous and unwary, had not the death of a very promiſing youth, (who fell a ſacrifice to the ignorance of one of theſe impoſtors) given me this melancholy occaſion. Beſides, theſe men fatten upon the miſeries and afflictions of other people; for they know full well that few perſons can hurt them, becauſe few or none will be willing to expoſe their own failings to the cenſure of their friends; nor do any care to let the world know they were ſo egregiouſly weak and ſilly, as to put themſelves under the direction of ſuch illiterate quacks. Dr. Robinſon's Treatiſe on the Venereal Diſeaſe, p. 13, 14.

parts of London, and there is ſcarce a lamp-poſt, wall, or gate, but what has paſted on them their infamous bills; nor a public avenue, where ſome of their vagabonds are not ſtationed, to wait for the unwary, by which ſuch numbers are enſnared and led to deſtruction. Their diſeaſes are made durable inſtead of being removed; and here it may very properly be ſaid, that the remedy proves worſe than the diſeaſe; for if they eſcape with their lives, the remainder of their days (by mal-treatment or poiſonous drugs) is embittered with miſeries, and infirmities inſurmountable. Therefore they muſt continue the reſidue of their lives (if ſuch a ſtate can be called living) an offenſive nuiſance to themſelves, and to all others that come within their reach.

Happy it is for mankind, that a medicine is diſcovered, which is endued with powers capable of curing this virulent, loathſome diſeaſe; and this medicine is mercury *, which, by the art of chemiſtry,

* Mercury, or quickſilver, is a mineral fluid, and more

miſtry, may be ſo changed and prepared, by being combined with other ſubſtances, as to be productive of very valuable and beneficial effects as a medicine, and capable of curing this malady in all its various forms. But when entruſted to the management of raſh pretenders, it will prove a curſe to mankind inſtead of a bleſſing, and a dangerous deſtructive poiſon. It may be conſidered as ſo many ſharp inſtruments in the hands of raving madmen, who, not guided by reaſon or judgment, are incapable of calculating the doſe ſuitable in different caſes and conſtitutions. This only can be diſtinguiſhed by an able phyſician, or ſurgeon,

more ponderous than any other. It is either extracted by art from certain ores, or found in a fluid ſtate in the earth. The greateſt quantities come from the Eaſt Indies; but there are conſiderable mines of it in Spain, Hungary, Peru, and Fruili. It is met with in three different forms, viz. pure, in ruddy clods, or glebes, which is cinnabar, and in ſtony glebes, or a mineral ſubſtance, in colour generally reſembling ſaffron; ſometimes this is blackiſh. This mineral is prepared into a variety of forms by chemical proceſſes, each of which have their reſpective uſes as a medicine.

who-

whoever elſe attempts it is a cheat, and a dangerous peſt to ſociety. No diſeaſe requires an earlier attention, or more immediate aid, than the venereal. Its ſymptoms often advance rapidly, every hour becoming more virulent: and if through quackery, irregularities, ignorance, or a falſe baſhfulneſs, it be improperly treated, neglected, or ſuffered to proceed unnoticed, it may lay the foundation for future miſeries, which never can be ſurmounted, and it often produces the moſt direful effects.

Various and tormenting are the ſymptoms of this raging diſorder, after it has got into the habit, eſpecially if no eſſential means are made uſe of to counteract its virulence. The throat becomes affected with offenſive ulcers, the breath emits a moſt horrid ſtench; ſcabs, blotches, or dark copper coloured ſpots, and fiſtulous ulcers appear on the ſurface of the different parts of the body; violent nocturnal pains torment the patient. At length the more ſolid parts (the bones) become affected with caries, or rottenneſs, (particularly

cularly the bones of the palate, and roof of the mouth.) The ſhin bones are affected with * nodes, the teeth fall out of their ſockets, and ſometimes blindneſs ſucceeds. The venereal venom ſometimes penetrates more deeply, laying hold of the vital parts, and producing a † pulmonary phthiſis, or conſumption of the lungs, cauſing a cough, purulent expectoration, hectic fever, nocturnal ſweats, reſtleſs nights, loſs of appetite, ‡ maraſ-

* Node is a riſing or tumor on a bone, in conſequence of a confirmed lues, or pox.

† Phthiſis pulmonatis, is an affection of the lungs, producing a conſumption, or general waſte of the whole body. In this diſeaſe the lungs are frequently loaded with tubercles, or little bags of matter, which is expectorated in coughing, and is always attendant on this diſeaſe, together with a hectic fever, waſting, night ſweats, and flying pains and ſtitches. It proceeds from many cauſes, ſuch as venereal and ſcrophulous virus, pleuriſy or peripneumony, long continued coughs; and is readily produced by intemperance in thoſe who are conſtitutionally diſpoſed to this diſeaſe, and in thoſe who have a particular ſtraitneſs and mal-formation of their cheſts.

‡ Maraſmus is lingering conſumption of the whole body, attended with a waſting fever, and various other ſymptoms.

mus, and a general waſte of the muſcular parts of the body; the patient becomes feeble, emaciated, and racked with moſt bitter pains: all the ſolids and fluids towards the laſt ſtage are a corrupted maſs. At length, being reduced to a mere ſkeleton, he impatiently waits the arrival of death, as his only deliverer from his torments. Such horrid ſcenes I have frequently ſeen with deep concern; and upon inquiring into the hiſtory of their caſes, and the manner they had been treated, I learnt, that neglect and mal-treatment had been the ſole cauſe of the diſeaſe terminating ſo wretchedly and fatally.

It is not uncommon for infants to receive an hereditary taint of this nature from their parents; which often appears at the time of birth, in the form of cruſty ſcabs, and puſtular eruptions, generally on their legs, thighs, and arms, or ulcers about various parts of the body: and if they ſurvive, they continue ſickly, weak, diſeaſed, and commonly uſeleſs members of ſociety; and fortunate it is,

when

when death kindly removes them in their infancy from ſuch a ſtate of wretchedneſs.

It is really a national concern, to hear of ſo many who fall victims to this horrid malady; and though it may not directly deſtroy the vital principle, yet it is almoſt a certainty, that it cuts ſhort the thread of life. Theſe afflicted perſons are often left to linger under infirmities, which are too deeply rooted to be eradicated; perhaps they may live to beget a half rotten poſterity, but the poor innocent children ſuffer ſeverely for the ſins and frailties of their parents. Whereas had they (on the firſt appearance of their diſeaſe, or ſoon after) been poſſeſſed of that prudence, which would have directed them to the man who would have attentively and judiciouſly conſidered their ſituations, put them upon a proper regimen, and attacked their diſtemper with a mercurial preparation, ſuited to their habit of body and adapted to the virulence of the diſeaſe, its effects on the conſtitution might have been counteracted, and all its terrible train of evils prevented: they

might have been reſtored to their priſtine health and vigor, and not have entailed future miſeries on ſucceeding generations. It is not unuſual in ſuch caſes to defer applying to the regular practitioner, until the conſtitution is ruined, and until it is paſt the power of art to repair it. And I am much deceived, if what I have advanced on this head, is not capable of being verified by the woeful experience of many. In truth, my readers, this is more frequently the caſe than you may probably conceive it to be, and a truly pitiable caſe it is: but it ever muſt remain ſo, unleſs ſuch means are deviſed, and executed, as will entirely defeat the authors of ſuch calamities.

It is very common to obſerve, in ſeveral of their hand-bills and advertiſements, that they have the effrontery to affirm, that they cure the various ſymptoms attendant on the different ſtages of this diſtemper, as well as many other diſeaſes of a direct contrary nature to the former, with one noſtrum. But that mankind can ſo far yield up their reaſon, as to believe that

that this can poſſibly be effected (when the degree of the diſeaſe is ſo different, and ſymptoms ſo variable in divers perſons) by one ſingle panacea, is to me truly ſurpriſing. And yet all this is to be accompliſhed without any regard to confinement, or reſtraint in diet; as if no diſeaſe, nor conduct whatever, could poſſibly withſtand the force and operation of their all powerful ſpecifics.

The reader will pleaſe to recollect, that I have, in a foregoing page, endeavoured to point out the abſurdity, and dangerous tendency of infallible noſtrums; and the indiſpenſable neceſſity of attending to different conſtitutions and circumſtances in each individual caſe. This can only be acquired by an attentive reflection on cauſes and effects produced in different diſeaſes, and which is the only means to arrive at a knowledge of curing diſeaſes. For a confined knowledge cannot qualify a man in any branch of the profeſſion, he muſt have an extenſive knowledge of the whole ſcience.

Now that mankind ſhould be induced to believe, that the venereal diſeaſe, rheumatiſm, gout, itch, ſcrophula or king's evil, ſcurvy, &c. are all to give way to this miraculous doſe, plainly ſhews, how little they are diſpoſed to think of a ſubject ſo ſerious in its conſequences as the abuſe of medicine. To enter into a minute detail on the nature, ſymptoms, and method of cure of theſe different diſeaſes, would ſwell out this eſſay beyond my original deſign, and might be conſidered ſuperfluous and unneceſſary. Let it ſuffice to ſay (and I believe by every rational perſon it will be allowed) that each of theſe diſeaſes has its characteriſtic ſigns, by which it may be readily diſtinguiſhed from any other; that its nature, appearances, and effects, are obviouſly different, and that they vary in different ſubjects. If all this is admitted, how then can common ſenſe coincide with their affirmations. Allowing that their compoſitions ſhould be efficacious in the cure of the diſeaſe alluded to, does it alſo follow, that they muſt be capable of curing every other?

The

The abſurdity of ſuch a ſuppoſition will not admit of debate.

Many of them, apprized of the dreadful apprehenſions that ſome perſons entertain of taking mercury, conſider it their intereſt to declare, that they cure this diſeaſe, in all its various ſtages, without adminiſtering a grain of it. Now theſe apprehenſions, which many entertain of this medicine, I acknowledge are not without foundation, when it is left to the diſcretion of quackery: but when entruſted to the management of a prudent and careful phyſician, or ſurgeon, I can from experience and obſervations venture to affirm, that they are entirely groundleſs. It may very ſafely and beneficially be adminiſtered at any period of life, in this diſtemper, with a ſtrict attention to the patient's ſtrength and habit, degree of virulence of the ſymptoms, and the effects which it produces, which are extremely uncertain; as ſome conſtitutions can bear, and will require a greater quantity than others to conquer the diſeaſe; while others will be ſenſibly affected by a much ſmaller quantity,

quantity, and will not require ſo much: and this depends on particular ſituations in particular caſes, and a greater or leſſer degree of irritability in the ſyſtem of different perſons, which demands our conſtant conſideration. For by a proper attention to this circumſtance, the ſucceſs and ſafety of this medicine ſolely depends. There is no medicine that can be depended upon to cure this diſtemper but a mercurial preparation, (unleſs it ſhould be a gonorrhœa * or a local affection) and thoſe that attempt to cure it by any other method will be baffled, and the patient will be diſappointed.

Great and valuable improvements of late years have been made in the adminiſtration of this medicine. Formerly pa-

* Gonorrhœa, or clap, is a local affection from an impure coition, producing an inflammation in ſome part of the urethra, attended with a diſcharge of a purulent appearance; but which is no other than an increaſed ſecretion of the natural mucus, that lubricates the paſſage changed in its conſiſtence and colour. It is to be treated as other local inflammations, with a low diet, mild cathartics, and refrigerating medicines; oily or mucilaginous injections: and by a ſtrict attention to regularity and the antiphlogiſtic plan, it will frequently require no other mode of cure.

tients were ſubjected to tedious and unneceſſary confinement, and ſevere ſalivations, who by experiments and obſervations, we are now convinced might have been cured by a milder method; and without experiencing the diſagreeable effects reſulting from ſo ſevere a proceſs. For by introducing this medicine into the habit, as an alterative, in a quantity ſuited to the ſymptoms of the caſe (at proper intervals) which may be known by the abatement of the ſymptoms, and the effects produced, a certain, ſafe, and pleaſant cure generally will be effected. I do not mean to inſinuate, that every caſe (however malignant and untractable in its ſymptoms) will invariably yield to this method. I am aware, that venereal complaints, in certain habits, and from peculiar cauſes, under the beſt treatment and ſkill of the moſt able of the profeſſion, will ſometimes require the perſeverance of months before they can be wholly ſubdued; as thoſe ſituated in the manner I have deſcribed in a foregoing page, and which will admit of an exception from this laſt mentioned ſyſtem.

There

There is a character in London, whoſe unlimited audacity and impudence exceeds all the reſt, and whoſe pretenſions are liable to produce as much mortality among the human race, as a peſtilence, famine, or the ſword. This profligate pretender (with wonted aſſurance) informs the public, that he is capable of curing cancers, diſeaſed bones and joints,, mortifications, and various other diſeaſes, indiſcriminately; denies the neceſſity of the knife in any caſe whatever; challenges the corporation of ſurgeons to contradict his affirmations; and impertinently makes free with the names of ſome of the moſt eminent and reſpectable among them.

The length of the advertiſement I mean (almoſt filling the column of a news paper) cannot have failed of attracting the notice of many: and its repeated inſertion in different papers, evidently ſhews that numbers are diſpoſed to credit his aſſertions, and entruſt themſelves to his management, without allowing themſelves the liberty of conſidering, whether what he advances be practicable, or conſiſtent with

reaſon

or not. Alas! unfortunate deluded people, I ſhudder to think what muſt have been the fate of many; and what will be the fate of others, as long as this impoſtor is permitted to continue his deceptions.—But while that propenſity to whatever is new and marvellous, which predominates among ſo many of our ſpecies, and which has raiſed ſo many illiterate perſons, and noxious things into reputation, and while mankind are ſo ready to follow the example of others, whoſe conduct is the leaſt fit to be imitated, I fear a regulation in this particular can hardly be effected. It requires but a very ſmall ſhare of diſcernment to detect the falſhood of his doctrines, and the impracticability of what he undertakes. Such a character as this I conſider as a moſt notorious cheat, on whom exemplary puniſhment ſhould be inflicted, in order to deter others. For the profeſſions of phyſic and ſurgery, when under no reſtraint, and ſubjected to no laws, nor regulations, are a moſt cruel ſcourge to mankind, and a ſerious national calamity. To credit the contents of ſuch

an advertiſement muſt be, to conſider ſurgeons either ignorant, raſh pretenders, or cruel, and inhuman ſavages; who, to ſatisfy their brutal inclinations, or from ſome intereſted motives, diſmember and mangle their fellow creatures under the plea of neceſſity. Surely mankind are not ſo far prejudiced as to entertain ſo ignoble an idea of a body of men, who endeavour to do their duty in the beſt manner they are able; and to render themſelves as ſerviceable and uſeful as poſſible. The plauſible falſhoods which are inſerted in ſuch advertiſements are a diſgrace to a news paper, an inſult to common ſenſe, and for the ſecurity of mankind, ought to be ſuppreſſed.

I am ſenſible that many perſons are of opinion, that ſurgeons often amputate limbs unneceſſarily, which otherwiſe might have been cured, provided they had patience, and inclination to attend to them long enough; and ſuſpect that this is moſt generally the caſe in public hoſpitals; and done with a view of getting rid of ſuch caſes as are likely to prove tedious and

ſome. But in this opinion mankind do them great injuſtice, and it is owing to this opinion that the character I allude to is principally indebted for the encouragement and ſupport he meets with. Thoſe gentlemen who fill the office of ſurgeons to public hoſpitals, are at the head of their profeſſion, and of ſuch eminence and abilities, that no other country can boaſt of a ſuperiority in this reſpect. And I am certain, that their humanity is equal to their ſkill; and juſtly entitles them to the confidence of mankind. They are very far from meriting thoſe illiberal aſperſions, with which, through miſrepreſentation and falſe prejudices, they are undeſervedly loaded. A long and regular attendance at the public hoſpitals in London, has afforded me repeated opportunities of being convinced, that the above opinion is groundleſs. I have always obſerved the greateſt humanity and attention ſhewn by theſe gentlemen to the afflicted poor; and every means purſued which were calculated for the preſervation of limbs and lives. And that in ſuch un-

fortunate caſes as were irremediable, and where the ſole chance of preſerving the patient's life depended on an operation. I have always found, that theſe operations were not attempted without a conſultation, and without the acquieſcence, and concurrence of the other ſurgeons of the ſame hoſpital. When they were unanimous in opinion that no other reſource was left the patient, they then conſidered it their duty to afford him that chance; and to explain to him how unhappily his caſe was circumſtanced, as not to admit of any other relief but by an operation. Such opinions I have ſeen delivered by thoſe gentlemen with that tenderneſs and concern, which I think muſt have inſpired every auditor with admiration and eſteem for their humanity towards their afflicted patients.

It is a melancholy truth, that there are ſome diſeaſes which are ſo circumſtanced, that the patient has no other chance for his life but by ſubmitting to the knife. And to determine whether the caſe will admit of any delay, or whether, if the preſent

preſent opportunity ſhould be neglected, another equally favourable may not offer, is a point, which requires the niceſt, and moſt accurate diſcernment.—This is not unfrequently the caſe in compound * fractures, where the ſurrounding ſkin, muſcles, tendons, (and ligaments when the injury is received at the joints) are ſo cruſhed and lacerated, and the bones ſo ſhattered, as in caſes where broad-wheeled waggons, or other ponderous bodies fall upon, or paſs over the limbs;) and when the parts are ſo bruiſed and impaired, that the circulation through them is ſo much impeded, that without immediate amputation a gangrene, and mortification muſt take place, and death inevitably follow. For inflammation ſoon takes poſſeſſion of the limbs, and an encreaſed irritation, and action of the veſſels of the whole ſyſtem, would fruſtrate our endeavours in an operation, ſubject the patient to unneceſſary pain, and haſten his diſſolution. Whereas

* Compound fracture, is a fracture accompanied with a wound; and ſometimes with a protruſion, or thruſting forth of the bone through the integuments, or ſkin.

had the operation been performed immediately after the accident, and before theſe ſymptoms had appeared, the patient might have been preſerved.

There are other caſes which will allow of longer deliberation, but where the knife becomes at laſt indiſpenſibly neceſſary, to afford the patient a fair chance for his life; as in joints, where the heads of the bones are enlarged, and rotten, and in putrid corroſive ulcers, where the texture of the bone underneath is greatly diſeaſed; and where, by the profuſe diſcharge attending it, the patient's ſtrength is greatly exhauſted, and he is become emaciated; or by the re-abſorption of a virulent pus, cauſing a hectic fever and night ſweats; if an operation is delayed, and theſe ſymptoms ſuffered to advance too far, until the patient's ſtrength is too much exhauſted, it will be then too late to propoſe an operation. Theſe are matters which require the greateſt judgment in a ſurgeon to determine, that he may not unneceſſarily and raſhly deprive his patient of a limb, or through ignorance,

or

or timidity deſiſt from affording him the only probable chance of his preſervation.

Many other caſes I could mention, in vindication of the operative part of ſurgery; but what I have already advanced on the ſubject, by a moment's reflection from every reaſonable man, I hope will be conſidered ſufficient, to convince him of the neceſſity of the knife in many deſperate accidents, and deplorable caſes.

Great, and frequently fatal errors are committed in the uſe of the lancet. This operation is daily performed by barbers, farriers, and ſuch like uninformed perſons; who, however expert they may be as operators, are badly qualified to judge whether the patient be likely to derive benefit or detriment from this evacuation. Allowing it to be neceſſary, how can they rightly determine the quantity proper to be taken away? To aſcertain this, the ſtate of the pulſe, and the other ſymptoms, are proper guides, which are circumſtances that they are totally unacquainted with. And it is their intereſt to

bleed

bleed every perſon who applies to them for that purpoſe.

A very pernicious cuſtom prevails among many perſons, but particularly the more laborious part of mankind, which is, on the firſt attack of any diſeaſe, they have recourſe to thoſe kind of people to be bled; as if they conſidered bleeding as a ſovereign remedy, and capable of checking the progreſs of every diſeaſe indiſcriminately. There are certain diſeaſes where the uſe of the lancet is primarily and indiſputably neceſſary, and productive of the moſt ſalutary effects; and where the patient by the neglect of it, muſt frequently inevitably periſh; and on the contrary, there are many other diſeaſes, where it is not only unneceſſary and improper, but often productive of the moſt malignant and fatal conſequences:—of the former are diſeaſes originating from plethora, where there is a ſuperabundant quantity of blood, of too denſe a conſiſtence cauſing an encreaſed force in circuculation, which impedes the regular action of the veſſels; ſuch a ſtate of the blood

blood prediſpoſes the perſon to inflammatory fevers, pleuriſies, peripneumony, phrenitis, and various other inflammatory diſeaſes. Of the latter are thoſe diſeaſes, where the blood is in too impoveriſhed a ſtate, with a dimiſhed action of the heart, and vaſcular ſyſtem; or thoſe originating from a fault in the ſolids and fluids, as in dropſies, agues, intermittent, nervous, putrid, and malignant fevers; in various chronic diſeaſes, or thoſe from a vicious conſtitution of the humours, as in ſcrophula, ſcurvy, &c. and where bleeding cannot remove the whole of the virus from the habit, but only a proportionable quantity as the blood drawn away contains.

It is the uſual cuſtom of many perſons, (though fortunately of late years it has been leſs in vogue,) to be bled twice a year, and they generally prefer the ſpring and autumn, which they conſider as the moſt favourable ſeaſons for this operation. This cuſtom, they imagine, protects them from diſeaſes, which otherwiſe they would be more liable to receive. This is a very

egregious miſtake, and is liable to entail on them the very miſchief, which they ſuppoſe it prevents. Thoſe who have accuſtomed themſelves to this habit for ſome years, will require it at the uſual ſeaſon of the year, at which this evacuation has been made; they will thereby materially injure their conſtitutions, and become obnoxious to various diſeaſes.

If the vaſcular ſyſtem is not over diſtended, and the circulating fluids not too rapid, the pulſe will be neither too full, ſtrong, nor oppreſſed. If ſo, how can it be neceſſary to weaken the powers of nature, and leſſen the action of the heart and arteries, which was not too much encreaſed. The pulſe is the certain diagnoſtic of the ſtate of the circulating fluids; and when the pulſe is too full and hard, it evidently proves that a plethora prevails, and that bleeding may be advantageouſly performed. But when the pulſe is neither too frequent, nor hard, nor the circulation too rapid, this evacuation is in general extremely injudicious, and often productive of fatal conſequences.

Nothing

Nothing will ſo quickly weaken the powers of nature, and produce ſo general a relaxation, as phlebotomy. It diminiſhes the action of the veſſels, and the motion of the blood through them; and if carried too far, may produce a general langour; for by this evacuation the pulſe may, to any degree, be weakened.

If it is admitted that there are certain diſeaſes where blood letting is not only injudicious, but extremely dangerous; and, on the contrary, that there are other diſeaſes, where bleeding is not only judicious, but indiſpenſably neceſſary, and productive of the moſt ſalutary effects; if this practice is conſidered as warrantable, I think it muſt alſo be admitted, that, to diſtinguiſh thoſe diſeaſes where bleeding may be beneficial from thoſe where it may prove prejudicial, muſt require a thorough knowledge of the characteriſtic marks by which one diſeaſe may be readily diſtinguiſhed from another.—This requires great experience, and attentive examination into cauſes, ſymptoms, and effects. And in thoſe diſeaſes requiring the uſe of

the lancet, it is a material conſideration to endeavour to aſcertain the quantity neceſſary to be taken away; which can only be judged of by the ſtate of the patient, in reſpect to ſtrength, conſtitution, date of the diſeaſe, and the degree of virulence of the ſymptoms. To inveſtigate this neceſſary quantity, the pulſe is the beſt and ſureſt guide.

As phlebotomy is an evacuation of greater importance than is generally imagined, I hope it will not be conſidered that I am too prolix on this part of my ſubject. Being aware that the imprudent uſe of it has been the bane of many, is a conſideration ſufficient to influence one that is anxious for the welfare of mankind, to declaim with the utmoſt energy, againſt the pernicious cuſtom of wantonly laviſhing away the vital fluid. And this is daily done without taking any advice about the propriety of ſuch an evacuation. The moſt able and diſcerning practitioner is not capable of *rightly* judging of his own caſe, and to preſcribe for himſelf under diſeaſe; of which we have had ſome recent inſtances, where from too great a

ſelf-

ſelf-confidence, ſociety have probably been deprived of ſome valuable members, and the profeſſion of ſome of its brighteſt ornaments, and this has happened through an ill-timed bleeding.—I hope theſe facts will inſpire the reader with a wholeſome dread of this pernicious cuſtom, ſo as to avoid falling into this error himſelf, and induce him to caution others from expoſing themſelves to the like danger.

The greater number of perſons that have recourſe to theſe phlebotomiſts, are the laborious, and pooreſt claſſes of people, who depend upon their manual labour for their own and families ſubſiſtence: and it ſeems as if divine providence interpoſes that ſo many eſcape, without ſome fatal accident; or at beſt without being deprived of the uſe of an arm. They do not conſider that they commit a valuable limb into the hands of a man, who is unacquainted with the ſituation of the arteries, nerves, and tendons of that limb. Either of theſe being punctured in the operation, may be productive of very ſerious conſequences, as the loſs of a limb, and in

ſome

ſome caſes life, or at beſt leave the perſon a cripple the remainder of his days. Theſe operators being unacquainted, or regardleſs of the conſequences that would reſult from wounding an artery *, nerve †, or tendon; and without feeling for the pulſation of an artery to diſtinguiſh its ſituation, and without endeavouring to avoid it, raſhly plunge in the lancet without regarding the poſſibility of laming the patient, or doing him more fatal miſchief.

* An artery may be punctured inſtead of, or together with a vein, which may be followed with a dangerous hæmorrhage, aneuriſm, and even death.

† The puncturing a tendon, or nerve, is generally attended with excruciating pain.—The limb becomes inflamed, ſwoln, convulſed, and ſtiff; and if proper aſſiſtance is not timely procured, it threatens general convulſions, a gangrene of the part, and may terminate fatally.

If a vein be cut aſunder there will be an extravaſation of blood. The arm becomes of a livid colour, ſwelled, ſometimes greatly inflamed, and very painful. This is ſometimes followed by ſuppuration, at other times by mortification. The above ſymptoms may proceed from a perſon uſing his arm too ſoon after bleeding; the action of the muſcles cauſing the vein to ſwell, and the blood is forced into the interſtices between the ſkin and fleſh.

Perhaps

Perhaps it may be ſaid, that as theſe accidents rarely occur through the operation of blood-letting, I am too ſevere upon a claſs of men, who get a livelihood by performing it. They may cenſure me as being of an uncharitable and ſevere diſpoſition, and that I aim at depriving theſe men of a ſubſiſtence. I ſhould be ſorry, if I knew that any perſon entertained ſo ignoble an opinion of me. It is true, there are many who make a trade of this operation, but moſt of them in conjunction with ſome other branch; and this is the caſe with midwives, barbers, and ſuch like.—Were ſuch perſons to confine themſelves to their own reſpective callings, they might meet with ſufficient employment to maintain themſelves and families, without preſuming to perform a chirurgical operation, and perhaps depriving a fellow creature of a valuable limb. Allowing that theſe accidents do not frequently happen, yet it is a hazard that every man is expoſed to, who entruſts himſelf under the hands of ignorant, illiterate practitioners: and there are many

of them, who perform this operation in a ſtate of inebriation. Theſe two circumſtances, viz. the ill effects that may enſue from blood-letting injudiciouſly, and unneceſſarily performed—together with the dangerous and ſometimes fatal conſequences that may attend injuring the parts herein mentioned, I am inclined to think will, by perſons who are rational, and capable of judging rightly, be conſidered of ſuch importance, as to require the neceſſity of warning mankind of the direful conſequences that may attend on ſuch incautious proceedings.

Perhaps ſome of my readers may be diſpoſed to ſtart the following queſtion.

Has either of the aforeſaid accidents never happened to the regular practitioner? It is not my intention to advance that they never have: all that I mean to ſay is, that to a cautious and well informed man, acquainted with the ſituation of the parts he ought to avoid injuring in the operation, I think, I may ſafely venture to affirm they never can happen. When ſuch blunders have been committed they muſt have proceeded

ceeded from groſs ignorance, or careleſsneſs; therefore cannot reaſonably be conſidered as a ſufficient vindication for the ſupport of uninſtructed men, who are ſo liable to commit them frequently.

I am inclined to think, that the term empiric, or quack, is not applied to ſo many as deſerve it. There are perſons who, though they may be qualified to compound and prepare medicines, yet are far from being qualified to take upon themſelves the province of the phyſician: and who, under the denomination of apothecaries, viſit the ſick, and preſcribe medicines *. Such a qualification is not to be acquired in the laboratory, or in an apothecary's ſhop; yet there are many who, without any other information than what ſuch a ſituation has given them, undertake the treatment of diſeaſes; and who after a certain term of years devoted to an apprenticeſhip, where probably few

* I am informed from good authority, that there are perſons who practice phyſic in the character of apothecaries, who have originally been porters in apothecaries and chymiſt's ſhops.

(if any) opportunities have occurred of attending patients, or examining into the nature of diſeaſes; and whoſe time has been principally ſpent in preparing medicines; and without any further medical purſuits, have ſet themſelves up for practitioners. But how they can be qualified for ſuch an undertaking, I ſhall leave to the reader's good ſenſe to determine.

The original deſign of an apothecary was to prepare the preſcriptions of the phyſician. Later ages have enlarged this branch, and it is now cuſtomary among perſons, in almoſt every ſtation of life, on the firſt attack of a diſeaſe, to ſend for an apothecary, in full confidence that he is capable of judging of their caſe, and of preſcribing a medicine and regimen ſuitable to counteract its effects on the conſtitution; and it ſeldom happens that a phyſician is conſulted until a diſeaſe is conſiderably advanced, or until it becomes untoward or refractory, or when ſome alarming ſymptoms threaten the patient. Let not the reader miſtake my meaning,

and think that I preſume to inſinuate, that apothecaries in general are not qualified for what they undertake; this is far from being my meaning, and far from the truth: nor is it likely that I ſhould thus vilify a profeſſion which I myſelf follow. I am perfectly ſenſible that the greater number of the gentlemen who practiſe this branch of medicine, are well informed, truly ingenious, and perfectly equal to what they profeſs. But on the other hand, I am confident that theſe gentlemen will agree with me in opinion, that there are ſome exceptionable characters, who are not ſufficiently informed, and who are ill qualified for ſo important an undertaking. But this is a circumſtance, which, among many other national evils, is overlooked. Mankind in general are incapable of diſcriminating, whether or not the practitioner they employ, is a man of real judgment in his profeſſion; and this is more frequently the caſe in the practice of phyſic, than in ſurgery; as in the latter, certain caſes occur, in which ignorance muſt be ſoon detected, ſuch as in luxations,

fractures, and accidents, which require an operation. When, in the former caſes, patients are often diſpoſed to receive, as goſpel, the directions, and ſwallow with confidence the medicines that are adminiſtered to them, without a ſuppoſition that thoſe who preſcribe them are equally ignorant and illiterate. Thoſe who are diſpoſed to purſue the means, will find no difficulty in acquiring that information which is neceſſary to qualify a man for a well-informed practitioner. In London, there are as able profeſſors in the different branches of medicine, anatomy, and ſurgery, as in any country whatever. There are many public hoſpitals, ſituated in different quarters of the metropolis, in which every practical information, both phyſical and ſurgical, may be received.

Thoſe who have neglected to purſue theſe eſſential parts of medical erudition, however regularly they may have ſerved an apprenticeſhip, can have no clear idea of the true nature of diſeaſes; they will be liable to commit egregious blunders in the

the treatmet of them; and the ſmalleſt errors are ſometimes productive of fatal conſequences. There are many practitioners of this deſcription who experience the confidence of mankind; becauſe mankind, in general, are not competent judges, whether the practitioner they employ, is a man of real abilities. And it ſometimes happens, that they get into an extenſive practice; while others, who have ſpared neither pains, nor expence, to acquire every requiſite kind of knowledge, and are truly ingenious, do not meet with the ſame encouragement, which from their merit and abilities, they are entitled to expect. This is an incontrovertible fact, and ſerves to prove how little inquiſitve people are in general, reſpecting the education of thoſe with whom they entruſt their health and lives.

Having advanced ſo far on the ſubject of Quackery, it will probably be expected that I ſhould propoſe ſome plan for removing this evil. But I fear it is an evil, too deeply rooted, to be eaſily eradicated; nor can it be effected, unleſs a regulation

is eſtabliſhed among the regular practitioners.

If a law was enacted, that no perſon whatever, ſhould be permitted to practice phyſic and ſurgery, but thoſe who have been examined by proper perſons appointed for that purpoſe, from whom they ſhould receive certificates of their qualifications;—that ſevere fines, and penalties, ſhould be inflicted on every perſon who ſhould preſume to practice without ſuch a privilege;—that perſons ſhould be employed, from time to time, to inſpect each reſpective pariſh, who ſhould make regular reports, and lodge an information againſt every one who ſhould attempt to practice without having received a certificate of their qualifications; it might perhaps be attended with the beſt of conſequences, and ſave the lives of many of his Majeſty's ſubjects.

The College of Phyſicians of London, are the guardians of medicine in this kingdom, and are the beſt judges who are, or are not, qualified for practiſing this

this ſcience, of ſo much importance to ſociety. If a certain number of this learned and reſpectable body, were to examine every perſon (in the Engliſh language *) who was to practice in the capacity of an apothecary, before they were permitted to preſcribe remedies for diſeaſes; and, were the Company of Surgeons to ſuffer no perſon to practiſe any branch of ſurgery, as well without †, as within the bills of mortality

* I mention the Engliſh language, becauſe thoſe who are admitted as fellows and licentiates of the college, are examined in Latin. And though a perſon may be qualified to anſwer any practical queſtion in his own native language, yet he may not be ſufficiently converſant with Latin to anſwer ſuch queſtions propoſed to him in that language.

† Thoſe without the Bills of Mortality, are permitted to practice ſurgery, and are not ſummoned to be examined before the Court of Examiners of the Corporation of Surgeons. This, if I may take the liberty to ſay, I think requires ſome regulation, which, if put in force, might be productive of ſalutary effects. Doubtleſs there are, in the country, as well as London, ſome practitioners who are not ſufficiently informed, and who may be ſent for in many caſes and accidents, which require immediate aſſiſtance, and where the fate of the patient depends on the ſkill of the

tality, except thoſe who have been examined, and received a teſtimony of their being qualified, from the Court of Examiners, very ſalutary benefits would be derived to mankind from ſuch a regulation: errors, and abuſes in medicine, of ſo pernicious a tendency, would be removed; the inſtitution of medical practice would be ſecured on an equitable foundation, and many lives would be preſerved from falling ſacrifices, through ignorant and raſh pretenders.

As public utility is my ſole view in writing theſe ſheets, I ſhould therefore be concerned, if I thought that my intention ſhould be miſconſtrued, ſo as to be ſuppoſed an advocate for cruelty and oppreſſion.—This is ſo far from being the caſe; that, on the contrary, compaſſion, and a fellow-feeling for the ſufferings of others, have influenced me to endeavour

the ſurgeon. For, in ſome parts of the country, a conſultation cannot be ſo readily procured as in London, and the patient may periſh; who, if proper aſſiſtance had been afforded him, might have been preſerved.

to warn mankind of the riſk they are expoſed to, by having their diſeaſes treated by unſkilful perſons.

I have not the vanity to expect, that my ſentiments, on this ſubject, will meet with the concurrence of every one that may be diſpoſed to peruſe this pamphlet. I am aware that advocates for quackery, in this country, are numerous; from theſe I do not expect the moſt liberal ſentiments. There are many credulous perſons who will readily reſign up their underſtanding, and become dupes to the moſt illiterate knaves. And there is not an inſtance in which the truth of this remark appears more plauſible than in quackery.—Such perſons will readily condemn and ridicule the ſentiments of a man that does not coincide with their own favourite ſyſtem, without conſidering, if what he has advanced, is conſiſtent with reaſon and truth, or not. I flatter myſelf, however, that theſe ſheets will fall into the hands of ſome who will judge of their contents more candidly, and conclude more rationally, and whoſe friendly ad-

monitions may induce many to avoid this ſnare.

Perhaps the reader will conſider me too prolix on this ſubject; but before I conclude. ſhall only add, that though I have preſumed to publiſh my thoughts on a ſubject which I conſider of ſo intereſting a nature, I have no ſelf-intereſted views; all I aim at, is to endeavour to induce mankind to avoid a neſt of profligate cheats, who are void of every principle of honour, honeſty, and remorſe of conſcience; who are actually ignorant of the profeſſion they preſume to practice, who not only defraud people of their money, but ruin their conſtitutions, and ſhorten the lives of many; who often receive large premiums, when they deſerve to be hanged. In ſhort, the numbers they maſſacre in a year, are truly a national evil; and I will venture to affirm, that if empiriciſm was aboliſhed, many lives would be yearly preſerved, who fall victims to their raſh and erroneous practice.

As this pamphlet is deſigned for the peruſal of the public at large, I have endeavoured

deavoured, through the whole of it, to expreſs myſelf in a clear intelligible manner. Where I have added a technical term, I have attempted to explain it; whether or not I have effected this, I will leave the reader to determine.

FINIS.

ERRATA. *Page* 6, *line* 18, *for* Pleureſy, *read* Pleuriſy.